

VZCZCXRO1033
RR RUEHROV RUEHTRO
DE RUEHNR #0015/01 0051619
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
R 051619Z JAN 10
FM AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0329
INFO SOMALIA COLLECTIVE
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC
RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC
RHMFISS/CDR USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE
RHMFISS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC
RUEILB/NCTC WASHINGTON DC
RUEPADJ/CJTJF-HOA J2X CAMP LEMONIER DJ

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 NAIROBI 000015

SIPDIS
STATE FOR AF/E, AF/RSA AND A/S CARSON

E.O. 12958: DECL: 2020/01/05

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [SO](#) [PINR](#) [EFIN](#) [EAID](#) [ECON](#)

SUBJECT: Somalia - TFG Prime Minister Reviews Progress in Wake of Jeddah ICG

CLASSIFIED BY: Robert Patterson, Counselor for Somalia Affairs, State Department, Somalia Unit; REASON: 1.4(B), (D)

11. (C) Summary: Transitional Federal Government (TFG) Prime Minister Sharmarke described to Somalia Unit December 30 his government's plans, immediately on his January 3 return to Mogadishu, to shake-up Mogadishu port operations by removing the current, corrupt leadership, and implementing a recently-concluded agreement with Dubai-based businessmen that could, he predicted, double annual port revenues. Sharmarke expressed concerns about apparent, increasing instability in Puntland. He said he had interceded with former Puntland strongman, and ex-TFG President Abdullahi Yusuf's family to discourage Yusuf from returning to Puntland. The Prime Minister described TFG Foreign Minister "Jengele's" late-December visit to Iran as designed to induce the GOI to end its alleged support to Eritrea, which in turn was supporting the TFG's enemies. A TFG delegation of one minister and four MPs would be in attendance at the Ahlu Sunnah Wal Jama'a (ASWJ) conference in Abuudwaq (Galgaduud Region) as of December 31, the Prime Minister said, as part of a continued effort to strengthen cooperation. The Prime Minister promised, again, that the one-year anniversary of President Sharif's TFG would find it in control of large parts of Mogadishu, after a planned, mid-January offensive. Meetings with Saudi officials following the December 17 Jeddah International Contact Group meeting had yielded some movement in the Saudi government's willingness to engage with the TFG. Efforts to induce the more than one hundred TFG MPs still in Nairobi to travel to Mogadishu for sessions of the Parliament now underway had yielded scant results. End summary.

12. (C) On December 30, one day after returning from an extended stay in Saudi Arabia following the December 17 International Contact Group meeting in Jeddah (septel), Prime Minister Sharmarke described some progress in the Transitional Federal Government's (TFG) complicated negotiations for support from the Government of Saudi Arabia. Sharmarke reported that the Saudis had agreed to consider requests that they fund TFG activities, provided that the requests were made in the form of well-argued grant proposals. The Prime Minister, citing a lack of TFG capacity, requested USG support in drafting the proposals. Somalia Unit officer agreed to investigate the possibility of recruiting someone experienced through a USAID program that was soon to be established via IOM.

13. (C) The Saudis also agreed, Sharmarke said, to provide assistance in organizing a media campaign to combat Islamic extremism. Sharmarke thought that the Saudis would offer programming that they had used in similar campaigns in Saudi

Arabia. Finally, Sharmarke said that the Saudis had agreed to allow those students who had been wounded in the December 3 suicide attack in Mogadishu and were being treated in a Saudi hospital to continue their medical training in Saudi Arabia once discharged from the hospital. Sharmarke said that he had visited the fourteen Somali patients -including one TFG Minister-- while in Saudi Arabia, and that his visit had been well-covered by the Saudi media.

14. (C) Sharmarke said that the TFG was interested in possibly retaining a lobbying firm to advance its interests in Washington. He planned a trip to the U.S. in February, and thought that he might speak with some potential lobbyists at that time. Sharmarke hoped that his February visit might be marked by a re-affirmation of USG support for the TFG.

15. (C) Money remained a problem for the TFG, Sharmarke said, and he was under instructions from TFG President Sharif to explore every possible opportunity to generate more revenue. To that end, he had successfully concluded an agreement while in Saudi Arabia that would allow a small tax to be applied to the livestock exported from south-central Somalia and Puntland to Saudi Arabia. Sharmarke hoped the tax -he estimated it would be about 25 cents per goat-would generate a few hundred thousand dollars per year for his government.

NAIROBI 00000015 002 OF 003

16. (C) Also promising, Sharmarke said, was an agreement recently concluded with Somali businessmen based in Dubai. The businessmen were convinced that Mogadishu port revenues could be doubled, and they had proposed a partnership with the TFG, which would see the businessmen conclude a one-year contract that would allot the TFG 85% of port revenues, with the consortium taking the remaining 15%. In exchange, the consortium would make to the TFG a one-time \$3 million payment and would manage the port for the year. Sharmarke said that step one was to replace current port managers, something he planned to do immediately after arrival in Mogadishu. The TFG would also move all port revenues generated into one Central Bank of Somalia account. (Note: Currently, some of the port's income flows through the hawalas Dahaabshil and Qaran. Moving the revenues to the CBS should increase transparency.)

17. (C) Sharmarke thought that "everyone" was concerned about increasingly instability in Puntland. He worried that President "Faroole's" erratic behavior was creating a vacuum, and that the likes of former TFG President and Puntland strongman Abdullahi Yusuf were attempting to use it to return to power. Sharmarke (himself from a Puntland clan, the Darood) had discouraged Yusuf through members of Yusuf's family from getting re-involved in Puntland. He planned to telephone Yusuf, who was in Dubai, on December 30.

18. (C) Sharmarke said that he had been approached by Puntland elders, who were also concerned about "Faroole's" missteps in Puntland. They had urged that he intervene with "Faroole." The TFG's complicated relations with the Puntland Administration, however, made the Prime Minister hesitant to do so. (Note: Sharmarke signed a cooperation agreement with "Faroole" in June 2009, but efforts by TFG President Sharif to sign a second such agreement were rejected by "Faroole" in November 2009. Relations between the two entities have been lukewarm since.)

19. (C) Per Sharmarke, TFG Foreign Minister "Jengele's" late-December 2009 visit to Iran had been at the instigation of the GOI. "Jengele's" mission was to discourage Iran from aiding Eritrea's efforts to fund al-Shabaab, Sharmarke said. "Jengele"

had seen the GOI Foreign Minister and President Ahmedinejad. Sharmarke alleged that Iran was much more active in East Africa. He said that Kenyan Prime Minister Odinga during a 2009 trip to Iran had won financial assistance to Kenya's Mombasa port and assistance in the construction or maintenance of dams and/or reservoirs.

¶10. (C) Sharmarke described the TFG's troubled efforts to build bridges to Ahlu Sunnah Wal Jama'a (ASWJ). The TFG had encountered problems in determining who really represented ASWJ, and had even seen money that it had given to ASWJ miss the intended target, he said. The TFG had provided \$50,000 to fund a Galgaduud ASWJ conference underway in Abuudwaq since December 18. A TFG Minister and four TFG MPs were to attend the conference, beginning December ¶31. (Note: the Abuudwaq conference was suspended on January 2, following al-Shabaab attacks on the ASWJ stronghold of Dhusamarebb.)

¶11. (C) In exchange for its agreement to provide funds to the conference, the TFG had insisted that ASWJ work with other ASWJ regional branches to create a national council. The TFG had given ASWJ a deadline of mid-February, Sharmarke said. Continued financial support from the TFG would ultimately be contingent, he continued, on the integration of ASWJ forces into the TFG's command structure.

NAIROBI 00000015 003 OF 003

¶12. (C) Sharmarke was unhappy that only slightly more than 300 of the Parliament's 550 MPs were currently at plenaries in Mogadishu. He had urged many of the Nairobi MP hold-outs on December 29 to return to Mogadishu. The TFG, he said, would book African Air tickets to Mogadishu for any MPs inclined to travel. (Note: In the end, few of the more than 100 MPs in Nairobi took Sharmarke up on his offer.)

¶13. (C) Comment: In the December 30 meeting, Sharmarke seemed cautiously optimistic that the TFG was, at last, beginning to grapple with the manifold problems facing it. He thought that the strong endorsement provided to the TFG at the December 17 International Contact Group meeting in Jeddah had been a shot in the arm for the government, and he seemed determined to capitalize on the fragile momentum it had created to advance the government's agenda.
RANNEBERGER